

Attorney's Docket No. 33339/206076

PATENT

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re: Laurent Benbadis et al. Group Art Unit: 1651
Appl. No.: 09/700,687
Filed: February 14, 2001 Examiner: R. Davis
For: MUTANT LACTOBACILLUS
BULGARICUS STRAINS FREE FROM
BETA-GALACTOSIDE ACTIVITY

October 15, 2001

Commissioner for Patents
Washington, DC 20231

AMENDMENT

Sir:

In response to the Office Action mailed July 16, 2001, please amend the above-identified application as follows:

In The Claims:

B1 1. (Amended) A mutant strain of *L. bulgaricus* lacking β -galactosidase activity which carries a non-sense mutation in at least one of the coding sequences of the lactose operon.

2. (Amended) The mutant strain of *L. bulgaricus* as claimed in claim 1, wherein said coding sequence is the sequence encoding β -galactosidase.

B2 3. (Twice Amended) The mutant strain of *L. bulgaricus* as claimed in claim 1, which was deposited on January 14, 1998 with the CNCM under the number I-1968.

4. (Amended) A lactic ferment, which comprises at least one strain of *L. bulgaricus* as claimed in claim 1.

5. (Amended) The lactic ferment as claimed in claim 4, wherein said strain of *L. bulgaricus* is combined with at least one strain of *S. thermophilus*.